



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## Edinburgh Research Explorer

### Spottiswoode's Practicks

**Citation for published version:**

Cairns, JW, *Spottiswoode's Practicks*, 2013, Web publication/site, Edinburgh Legal History Blog.  
<<http://www.elhblog.law.ed.ac.uk/2013/05/22/spottiswoodes-practicks/>>

**Link:**

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

**Document Version:**

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

**Publisher Rights Statement:**

© Cairns, J. (Author). (2013). Spottiswoode's Practicks. Edinburgh Legal History Blog.

**General rights**

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

**Take down policy**

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact [openaccess@ed.ac.uk](mailto:openaccess@ed.ac.uk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

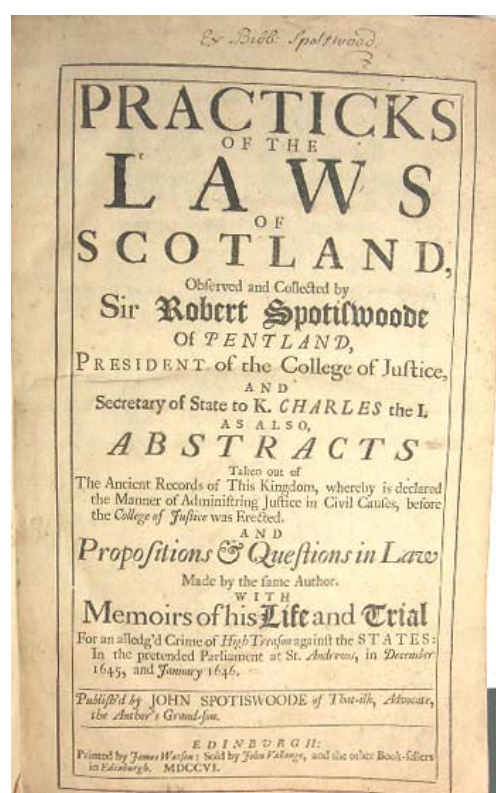


## The Edinburgh Legal History Blog

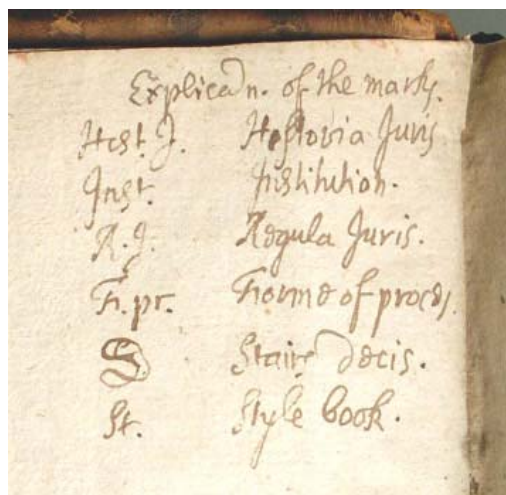
### Spottiswoode's Practicks

Posted on 22/05/2013 by John Cairns

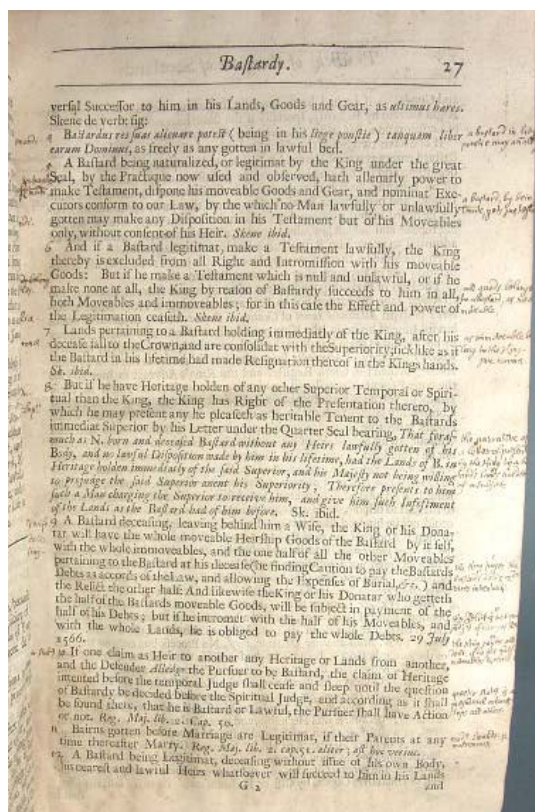
Your blogger is lucky enough to own John Spottiswoode's (or Spotswood's) own copy of his edition of his grandfather's Practicks of the Laws of Scotland. There was a sale of Spotswood's library after his death (some 1292 items were auctioned), but obviously some books were kept by the family. A later inventory of the Library at Spottiswoode House survives, and it is possible to identify this copy in it; at the top of the title page the volume is inscribed: "Ex Bibl. Spotswood". Spottiswoode House was demolished in 1939 and its contents dispersed. Presumably the books that remained were dispersed then. Further research might illuminate this. Certainly family papers were acquired by the National Library of Scotland in three tranches.



In his introduction to his grandfather's Practicks, Spotswood suggests that his grandfather may have been collecting material for a "Pandect" of the Scots law: presumably he meant a work comparable to Stair's Institutions. While this may perhaps have a loose foundation in family oral history, there is no reason to accept this. It may be an ex post facto rationalisation of the nature of the work. The version printed is organized alphabetically; a number of manuscripts of the Practicks survive, some of which might loosely be described as "systematic", rather than alphabetical.



The Practicks give us insight into legal practice in the time of Spotswood's grandfather; but the printed version is interesting as a reflection of the grandson's interests and concerns. His own copy is annotated relatively extensively; whether this was work towards another edition or for Spotswood's own interest is as yet unclear, given that some material is personal material about his grandfather, while some is juridical in nature.



This entry was posted in [Practicks](#), [Spottiswoode](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).